

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Environmental Education Network Steering Committee

Conference Call Monday, January 22, 2007

Steering Committee Attendees:

John Dindo, Dauphin Island Sea Lab
Quenton Dokken, Gulf of Mexico Foundation
Linda Broussard for Gaye Farris, USGS NWRC
Bryan Fluech, Florida Sea Grant
Phillip Hinesley, AL Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, Coastal Section
Gary Lytton, Rookery Bay NERR
Wendy Sera, NOAA Special Projects Office
Alison Hammer, NOAA Special Projects Office
Tara Shultz, Texas State Aquarium
Sharon Walker, Univ. of Southern Mississippi
Lee Yokel, GOMA Environmental Education Coordinator

Others:

Heidi Recksiek, NOAA CSC
Amy King, AL Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, Coastal Section
Tabitha Whalen-Stadler, Rookery Bay NERR

Current Homework

1. Quenton Dokken with the Gulf of Mexico Foundation is exploring opportunities to expand the Texas Restoration Workshop to include a session for individuals working on international education projects.
2. Gary Lytton will speak with Stephanie Bailenson to find out the State of Florida's position on the gulfofmexicoalliance.org URL. Sharon Walker will review opportunities for hosting the site. The EEC will continue to work with NOAA's Special Projects Office to pick a date for a website workshop.
3. EEN Yearly Workshop – Phillip Hinesley will check with the ADCNR new Five Rivers Center for possible meeting location; Sharon Walker will investigate Mississippi locations; the EEC will put out a call for partnering organizations and potential dates of conflict. A conference call for future planning is scheduled for Friday, February 16, 2007 at 9:00 CST.
4. The Steering Committee is to help solicit continued membership for the Listserv.
<http://www.disl.org/mailman/listinfo/gomaeen>

Acronyms

GOMA = Gulf of Mexico Alliance

EEN = Environmental Education Network

EEC = Environmental Education Coordinator

GCOOS = Gulf Coast Ocean Observing System

COSEE = Centers for Ocean Science Education Excellence

UUP = Underserved and Underrepresented Populations

Agenda General Notes

1. Miscellaneous

a. Update on GCOOS E&O Position

Sharon Walker reported that GCOOS would soon announce a position opening for an Education and Outreach position housed at the University of Southern Mississippi's J.L. Scott Aquarium in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. Funds were secured from Texas A&M University. The individual hired will interface with the GOMA EEC. Dr. Walker also noted that GCOOS would be submitting a preproposal to the current RFP issued for International Ocean Observing Systems (IOOS). Those preproposals submitted with request 10% of each budget to go toward education efforts. No monetary figures were defined at the time.

b. Ocean Science Bowl & AL COSEE 2-day workshops Feb. 9-10, 2007

Dr. Walker noted the upcoming regional Ocean Science Bowl team competitions. The competition involves high school students in grades 10-12. Regional winners go to a national competition held in a different location each year.

Dr. Dindo reported that the rescheduled Alabama COSEE informal workshop was scheduled with 25 participants signed up at the time of the call. The weekend workshop is intended for museum educators, extension people, and others involved in informal education. Topics generally cover timely environmental issues many which relate to the GOMA priority issues.

c. NOAA 200th Anniversary Celebration

NOAA is celebrating its 200th year with celebrations at various coastal locations around the country. The Dauphin Island Sea Lab was chosen for the Gulf Coast Celebration to coincide with Discovery Day on the island. To learn more about the celebration log onto: www.celebrating200years.noaa.gov. Vice-Admiral Lautenbaucher is noted to be in attendance. Ground breaking for a new National Marine Fisheries Building will also occur. A call to invite the right people was requested. The EEC asked if anyone had any suggestions for display items or activities with no response.

d. NOAA Staffing Changes

It was announced from the NOAA Special Projects Office that Wendy Sera was leaving and moving to Texas. It was noted that her contributions were great and that everyone would miss her. Alison Hammer is her replacement and an additional support staff maybe available in the future.

2. Committee Updates (underserved, international, website, public awareness)

A general request was made to list the current participants of each Working Group in information for the next call.

Underserved and Underrepresented Populations – Bryan Fluech reported for the UUP Working Group. He noted the group was compiling lists of organizations that interact with UUPs or have the potential to do so. The group is reviewing and drafting UUP definitions and noted the misunderstandings of what this group is and how it is termed and phrase is used. Finally, a survey is being developed.

International – Quenton Dokken reported on the potential partnership between the Gulf of Mexico Foundation (GMF) and GOMA EEN. The GMF has been working with groups involved in Mexico and the Caribbean. There is a possibility to work with the GMF in building this network to extend to educational opportunities as well. The GMF is working with the Restoration Priority Issue Team organizing a meeting in May. It is possible that an exploratory international education outreach component could be included. It was also discussed that a Gulf Summit led by Tamaulipas, Mexico and the Harte Institute maybe held in July in Tampico, Mexico. However, no one was aware of any preparations and thus questioned if the meeting would be held.

Website – The EEC gave a review of activities to date to include the initial conference call meeting, data being collected by USGS, and NOAA's effort to develop the site. Gary Lytton offered to talk with Stephanie Bailenson in Florida to discuss the current public URL and the state's intentions. It was noted the need for an organization to host the site such that information can move quickly. The EEC would email Davida Remer for website updates and Sharon Walker would investigate potential site hosts. A core group of decision makers would be involved in the website planning. A call for volunteers was made with Amy King volunteering for the committee.

Public Awareness Campaign – The EEC commented that they were getting ready to convene a core group of people to begin the next steps for the Public Awareness Campaign. Bryan Fluech noted that Community Based Social Marketing was a crucial step to any successful campaign to not only inform the target audience but also effect behavior change. He referred to a well known expert as reference, Doug Mackenzie-Mohr www.cvsbm.com. There was a call for Steering Committee member volunteers and Tabitha Whalen-Stadler, Tara Shultz, and Heidi Recksiek volunteered to participate.

Other Notes – The Rookery Bay NERR is continuing Community Workshops, building on the momentum from the first series of GOMA workshops. Three topical workshops are planned; one each for January, February, and March. They will be addressing one critical GOMA issue for each workshop.

Listserv – It was noted that the listserv has been useful for several people who have used it. The EEC would forward the web sign up address when call was over to request the Steering Committee to continue to solicit participation.

3. Funding Review

The EEC reported that the Dauphin Island Sea Lab had been requested to submit a formal proposal to the Gulf of Mexico Program and that other preproposals were pending. There was discussion that organizations should attempt to compliment their existing with GOMA information without additional funding. Organizations should look for opportunities to add something to existing materials for enhancement.

Additional discussion noted that a current challenge is sustaining interest in the GOMA in Florida (as well as other states). Continued documentation of successes as well as ongoing actions and commitments within the Alliance that can be shared in Florida with the Governor's Office is good to keep the GOMA from falling off "the radar". The GOMA needs to find a way to sustain political will within leadership – internal strategy to keep alliance alive and well. Communication was noted as a crucial component to that success.

4. Network Workshop

a. Education and Outreach Yearly Meeting / Steering Committee Meeting

The EEC noted that the *Governors' Action Plan* calls for a yearly gathering of the EEN. A general discussion was held regarding timing, purpose, and location for such a meeting. The length was noted to be a half day for the Steering Committee to meet with a day and a half for the EEN. The June time frame of for last year's Rookery Bay meeting worked well so the EEC was requested to put out a call for conflicts and potential partners. Funding the workshop was discussed and currently none has been identified. Potential host sites were identified for Alabama and Mississippi. Phillip Hinesley and Sharon Walker would investigate potential meeting locations in their area. The purpose of the meeting was not discussed. A need for potential private sector involvement was also noted. There will be another organizational conference call on: Friday, February 16, 2007 at 9:00 CST.

b. Other

There is a National Marine Educators Association conference the last week of April.

5. Set date for next call

The next Steering Committee Conference call is scheduled for: Monday, April 23, 2007
The next call for EEN Workshop Planning is: Friday, February 16, 2007 at 9:00 CST

To view other Priority Issue Team Activities: <http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/>